

**ORDER REGARDING ELECTRONIC DEVICES  
IN COURTROOMS AND HEARING ROOMS**

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**WHEREAS**, the District Court Chief Judge is granted administrative authority over the courts within the judicial district pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 484.69, subd. 3;

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota General Rule of Practice Rule 2.01 requires dignity and solemnity to be maintained in the courtroom and that there shall be “no unnecessary . . . electronic device . . . or other distracting activity in the courtroom”;

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Judicial Council Policy 521 directs each judicial district to establish a policy to address what is acceptable regarding possession and use of electronic devices by court participants and court visitors;

**WHEREAS**, photography, audio and video recordings are governed by Minnesota General Rules of Practice Rule 4 and the Fifth Judicial District Order Regarding the Use of Video and Audio Recordings in Courtrooms and Courthouse Common Areas, issued simultaneously with this Order;

**WHEREAS**, technology is continually advancing and providing a benefit to greater use of electronic devices in the everyday legal practice;

**WHEREAS**, wireless internet is provided in every courthouse in the district and serves as a resource for access to calendars and research materials;

**WHEREAS**, the Fifth Judicial District encourages use of available electronic devices to aid in legal counsel, scheduling, case processing and presentation;

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED,**

1. Electronic devices including, but not limited to, cellular phones, computers, tablets, and “smart” devices shall not be permitted in the courtrooms or hearing rooms, except as specifically allowed in paragraphs 1(a), 1(b) and 1(c) below:
  - a. If specifically allowed by the presiding judge, electronic devices may be used by self-represented litigants, attorneys and their staff, probation and child protection employees and their staff, for the following purposes: to determine schedule availability, to access case files, to take notes, to conduct relevant research, and other purposes as specifically

allowed by the presiding judge. Access and usage shall not disrupt the proceedings and may be restricted by the presiding judge if it becomes disruptive.

- b. Electronic devices must be turned off or placed on “silent” so as not to disrupt the court proceedings.
  - c. This paragraph does not apply to judicial staff conducting their assigned duties.
- 2. All forms of photography, audio and video recording are prohibited pursuant to Minnesota General Rule of Practice 4, except as specifically allowed pursuant to Minnesota General Rule of Practice 4 or the Fifth Judicial District Order Regarding the Use of Video and Audio Recordings in Courtrooms and Courthouse Common Areas.
  - 3. Any person who fails to comply with this order shall be subject to confiscation of the electronic device, and/or being held in contempt of court and any appropriate sanctions.
  - 4. This order does not apply to the Law Library in any courthouse.
  - 5. This order shall be displayed in an area viewable by court participants and visitors in each county.

**BY THE COURT**

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Gregory Anderson  
Chief Judge  
Fifth Judicial District